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SUBJECT: CUBA: MORE ON THE OPPOSITION UNITY DOCUMENT

Classified By: COM Michael E. Parmly: Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (SBU) Pol-Econ Counselor followed up April 16 with "All United" leader Vladimiro Roca on next steps for the "Unity for Freedom" document that he and twelve other key dissidents had signed on Friday April 13 and released to the media on Sunday April 15. According to Roca, each of the original signatories would walk around with the document and seek additional signatures for a month, at which point the democratic opposition would make public some new statement regarding the broad support the initiative has won. Roca added that the signers agreed they should release the document first to Radio Marti, which would create an audience on the island. Roca said that already some private citizens that are not members of dissident groups have heard the story on Radio Marti and called him to ask if they could sign.

¶2. (SBU) The following is the list of original signatories:

--Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello (Leader of Assembly to Promote Civil Society)
--Vladimiro Roca
--Oswaldo Paya (Leader of Christian Liberation Movement)
--Hector Palacios (Recently freed political prisoner)
--Elizardo Sanchez (Cuban Commission for Human Rights)
--Guillermo Farinas (Independent journalist)
--Julia Cecilia Delgado (Liberal Party)
--Laura Pollan (Damas de Blanco)
--Bertha Soler (Damas de Blanco)
--Julia Nunez (Damas de Blanco)
--Rene Gomez Manzano (Assembly to Promote Civil Society)
--Miriam Leyva (Dama de Blanco and independent journalist)
--Oscar Espinosa Chepe (Freed Political Prisoner and Economist)

¶3. (C) Roca also clarified that the document's distribution to the media via his fax machine constituted its "rollout." There would be no ceremony in Havana, although he expected lots of follow-up questioning by the media of the various signatories. Roca said he also expected retaliation by the Castro regime, in the form of a smear campaign that makes the document appear to be Made in the USA, accompanied by new initiatives to try to split apart the opposition. As the document itself states, there is no new umbrella group or formal bloc that is now created by this sequence of events; however, if and when circumstances arise that require a unified voice from the opposition, they will regroup and act in unison.

¶4. (C) Comment: As Roca, Martha Beatriz Roque and Oswaldo Paya have told us and demonstrated by their recent actions,

the democratic opposition has matured. The Moratinos visit was certainly a catalyst, but in our view only provided the timing and the context for an outcome that was already underway. Common appeals to release political prisoners, led by the Damas de Blanco, came close to obtaining this kind of consensus just three weeks ago, on the 4th anniversary of the crackdown that put their husbands (The 75) in prison. This new document is far better, in that it talks not only about political prisoners, but also about democratization and broader rights for the Cuban people.

PARMLY